The Mustard Seed Catholic Worker

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Thanksgiving Newsletter

Dear friends,

Here we are… finding ourselves in late November already!
November is a month that emphasizes the giving of thanks. It seems the perfect

time for us to express our gratitude to you all: “Thank you, thank you, thank you, friends and supporters”… for without you the work would not go on as it so wondrously does. The labor of love that is the Mustard Seed began in the fall of 1972. For 43 years now the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker has been serving up the works of mercy for Worcester’s poor. We are very much obliged as your help has been essential to fulfilling the Mustard Seed’s mission.

This is our third e-missive to supporters since the founding community and friends assumed leadership on Piedmont Street. We are happy to report that the weekday meal goes on and that new initiatives are being taken up by more and more concerned others. Several new church and other groups are cooking, volunteering and/or undertaking projects helpful to the Seed’s cause. Our vision has long been to bring a bit of the reign of Heaven to earth: to seek and promote that reign likened by Jesus to “the smallest of all seeds”… he noting “that when grown it becomes a great tree in which the birds of the air find rest.” Our eyes have indeed seen the glory of this mystery of growth from humble beginnings to a grand shared work that keeps on going and growing. The unspectacular regular round is also what makes for glory at end. We partake of that mystery each day as we all continue to serve supper each weekday around 5:40 to anywhere from 70 to 200 guests. We are indeed greatly blessed with a big and oft boisterous family! We remain grateful to God that all of us can eat here from the great plate of God’s providence for either physical and/or spiritual nourishment. In loving the visible neighbor, the Christian faith asserts, we love the invisible God. May we “carry it on.” We have, by grace, been doing just that… with many of us busy with speaking, teaching, praying, writing and serving. Below is news of our shared labors of late on behalf of those poor we serve here on Piedmont Street and on behalf of our shared and common good everywhere. Please know we are most grateful for it all.

Here’s the latest news to enjoy.

- Folksingers Jack Rollins and the Meadows Brothers held a Benefit Concert at First Baptist Church for us.
- The core community received training in use of Narcan with educator Luis Cantres of AIDS Project Worcester as to more ably respond to potentially lethal drug overdoses.

- Men from the local Cursillo Retreat Movement served their first meal on 11/3 and they brought their guitars and voices to share too. They also are helping winterize.
- The annual Memorial Mass for Gerard Larochelle was celebrated on November 6th with Fr. Paul O'Connell leading our family of friends in sacred worship. We continue to meet as a community for prayer at 7:15 PM each Friday. Please join us as the Spirit moves.
- Kim O'Konis continues to serve the needs of the poor with pets and the pets themselves. An article appeared in the Worcester Telegram that was later picked up by AP Newswire for a wider readership. Thanks and congratulations, Kim. Please see: http://www.telegram.com/article/20151106/NEWS/151109545 for the original article. The photo is of Kim and friends, human and canine, at the Mustard Seed.
- Young women from Serenity House of the Grafton Job Corps are joining in the labors of serving and cleaning. Together we are thinking of ways to reach out to the neighborhood children. They also held a food drive for us as did some Boy Scouts from Northboro. The women from Grafton wish to invite the children to a Christmas party at the Seed that they would host. Other parties are planned for adults and children for Christmas.
- Some thought has been given these days to possibly reviving some aspect of the after-school program once held at the Mustard Seed for neighborhood children.
- Algonquin High School held a food and resource drive in support of the Food Pantry. They made a much needed generous contribution to the food fund and refilled the pantry shelves with donated foodstuffs.
- Members of Saint Richard's Church in Sterling are helping to supply turkeys and "fixins" for neighborhood families so that they may enjoy Thanksgiving at home. Mary McDaniel here at the Mustard Seed is coordinating Thanksgiving and Christmas donations and festivities.
- Saint Francis Episcopal Church in Holden provided warm hospitality to Josephine Masserelli and Michael Boover who were guest speakers at three liturgies on the weekend of November 7 and 8. The Church was most welcoming, receptive to our message and giving. They collected needed cleaning supplies for us. Saint Francis also prepares and serves a meal at the

Seed every second Wednesday of the month. Earlier, Michael Boover spoke at La Salette Shrine in Attleboro on Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton and had a book signing for his "15 Days of Prayer with Dorothy Day" published not long ago by New City Press. He would be happy to speak elsewhere on Day and Merton and sign books as invited. Michael can be contacted at (508) 753-8974 if you have interest in a speaking engagement.

- We lost one of our own when Patricia Daly recently succumbed to cancer. (Please see: http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/telegram/obituary.aspx?pid=176213267). She had a beautiful Mass of the Resurrection at Christ the King Church celebrated by several of our priest friends. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Richard Alix, her husband of many years. Patty and Rich first met at the Mustard Seed. We love them so. Our prayers and sympathies also go out to Ida Casey, of Iowa, who was at the Seed in the late 70s. Ida just lost her beloved husband Rick Fyffe. Prayers for them and us all.
- Several churches are collecting Christmas presents for the annual Christmas party that will be held here on December 20th.
- We have a Facebook page that is garnering some attention from friends and interested parties. Please "like" us if you warm to inspiration and news via social media at: Mustard Seed Catholic Worker: https://www.facebook.com/mustardseedcw/. Thanks.
- We have a growing "Needs List." We can use: prayer, funds to pay bills and complete renovation projects, paper goods, napkins, coffee cups, sugar, non-sugar sweetener, coffee, milk, dish detergent, toilet paper and hygiene products. We can also use non-perishable food items for the food pantry. Additionally, warm winter coats, sleeping bags and blankets are needed for distribution. Such donations could be dropped off at the house any weekday from 3 to 5. Financial contributions may be made out via check to the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker. Please send along to PO Box 2592, Worcester, MA 01613 instead of the street address. That would be a help. Thanks.
- In gratitude for all you do and in a plea for peace among all people, we share these sung prayers from the Celtic Christian tradition. https://soundcloud.com/2013-peace-pilgrimage/grant-peace-to-all-on-earth.

… along with a picture of the food pantry recently restocked thanks to many friends!
(Photo thanks to Koz)

Blessings galore, dear friends, and let us continue to pray and work together,

The Mustard Seed Catholic Worker Community